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BRIAN SANDOVAL  
Governor



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Veterans Memorial Cemetery  
1900 Veterans Memorial Drive  
Boulder City, Nevada 89005  
(702) 486-5920 • Fax (702) 486-5923

## Minutes

Name of Organization: **Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WVAC)**

Date and Time of Meeting: **March 4, 2015 (9am-12pm)**

Meeting Location: **VIA Videoconference with Public Access**

*Members of the public were able to participate in person at the Veterans Benefits Administration Building, 5460 Reno Corporate Dr. Reno, NV 89511 or the VBA conference room 6900 N. Pecos Rd. N. Las Vegas, NV 89086*

### **\*Call to Order**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Davis calls meeting to order at 9:04am.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Chairman Davis

ROLL CALL: Yvonne Betron calls roll for official members.

**Members present include:** Anne Davis, Roberta Pike-Oates, Charley Smith, and Anthoneal Newman.

**Non-council members:** present during Roll Call include: Willette Gerald and Yvonne Betron.

**Members of the public in attendance:** Tracy Soliday, Glenna Smith, Ann James, Terina Caserto and Carol Simenson.

**Motion to approve agenda:** Roberta Pike-Oates moved to approve agenda, Charley Smith seconded. Agenda was approved by unanimous decision.

## **Women Veteran Advisory Committee (WVAC)**

PAGE 2

**Motion to approve previous minutes:** Roberta Pike-Oates moved to approve 1/7/15 minutes. Charley Smith seconded. Minutes approved by unanimous decision.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** This was the first meeting Ann James attended. She introduced herself and also briefly explained her research. Willette Gerald also noted that a new Women Veterans Coordinator had been hired and would begin working on March 16, 2015.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- None

### **CHANGES TO AGENDA:**

- Representatives from Nevada Job Connect, UNLV, and WNC are absent and employment issues may not be fully covered in the intended discussion.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Obtain data on Nevada's Women Veterans.
- Collaborate with other Veterans Services and share event information.
- New hire selected for the Women's Veterans Coordinator.
- Update NDVS website to include events and information for women Veterans.
- Introduce PSA (Public Service Announcements) into outreach plan. This will be added to our recommendation in our final report.
- Town Hall meeting should be publicized and publish the information from these meetings. This will be a recommendation in our final report.
- Terina Caserto, Director of Veteran Services at University of Nevada, Reno, addressed education issues.
  - Strategies to get more women Veterans to pursue education opportunities.
  - Social workers are on campuses of University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), and Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), through the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) grant but women have not taken advantage of this service.
  - UNR has a very low response rate from Women Veterans. Currently 86 women have identified themselves as veterans. This is approximately 17% of the total veteran population at the university. Their graduation rate is good and they are spread throughout multiple programs at the university. She is considering the development of a mentoring program. There are transition issues with families. She believes some women do not identify themselves as veterans because they see that part of their life being behind

## **Women Veteran Advisory Committee (WVAC)**

PAGE 3

them and they want to move forward with their education and new career. She is trying to work with other programs as the university rather than stove piping services through the veteran's services office. This may get women more involved.

- Terina Caserta also mentioned she is working to start a new program that targets non-traditional students. These are ones that are not straight out of high school, they may be older, or have a break in their education. This may appeal to our veteran population. UNR has a good relationship with TMCC. Terina noted that 80% of students transfer from community college to the university. Some are more comfortable at the community college initially as they are smaller and offer a wider variety in scheduling. Terina also noted that mid-day meetings are often difficult for women since they may be juggling school, work, and children.
  - The WVAC committee members ask that Terina and her employees not get discouraged and continue to try to reach women veterans. Anthoneal Newman recommended offering food at these meetings. Also, some women have been victims of military sexual trauma and domestic violence and may be reluctant to attend. Anthoneal Newman mentioned the use of scholarships for women veterans. Glenna Smith noted that many of the veteran's organizations provide a variety of scholarships for veterans. It might be a good idea to communicate with these organizations to see if any currently offer scholarships for women veterans.
  - Anthoneal Newman mentioned that UNLV holds a veteran's orientation in the fall as the school term begins. They provided t-shirts.
- Employment issues
    - Discussion was held regarding employment. All veterans continue to struggle with translating their military skills to civilian skills. There are several sources that offer assistance with this. Many receive assistance during the transition assistance program. Perhaps veterans are not taking advantage of this service then. This is several long days of briefings where soldiers just want to complete it. Many think they can do it themselves. Sometimes university career services are not trained well in how to translate military skills to fit civilian employment.
    - There are also differences between guard/reserve veterans versus active duty veterans. The guard/reserve veterans may be more familiar with the sources of assistance since they are already familiar with them. Active duty veterans may move as they leave active duty and not know what services are available in their new location.

## **Women Veteran Advisory Committee (WVAC)**

PAGE 4

- The Green Zone network is another source for Nevada Veterans to connect with potential employers.
  - Potential recommendation: Maintain the website with current resources. Perhaps the Green Zone needs staffing to assist on the employee side with resume and skill translation. Green Zone should be a one-stop shop. Market the Green Zone to the wider civilian community to better connect the community with veterans. This would require a marketing campaign of 12-24 months to include a variety of media sources and events. They should also target rural communities. This would require funding to develop and implement. Showing unemployment numbers for veterans might assist in spurring interest and need.
  - Discussion regarding veteran unemployment: Currently there is no requirement to identify as a veteran when applying for unemployment compensation. This would fall under the Nevada Governor's purview. Develop recommendation to identify veterans during unemployment application process so that veterans can be connected to veteran services.
- Items for May 6, 2015 meeting discussed
    - Follow up on previous report and prepare recommendations for the final report. Research how to get the NDVS/WVAC information included in the V.A.'s 8 page newspaper insert.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

Next meeting is set for May 6, 2015 from 9:00am to 12:00pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** none

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Davis made a motion to adjourn, Charley Smith seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.